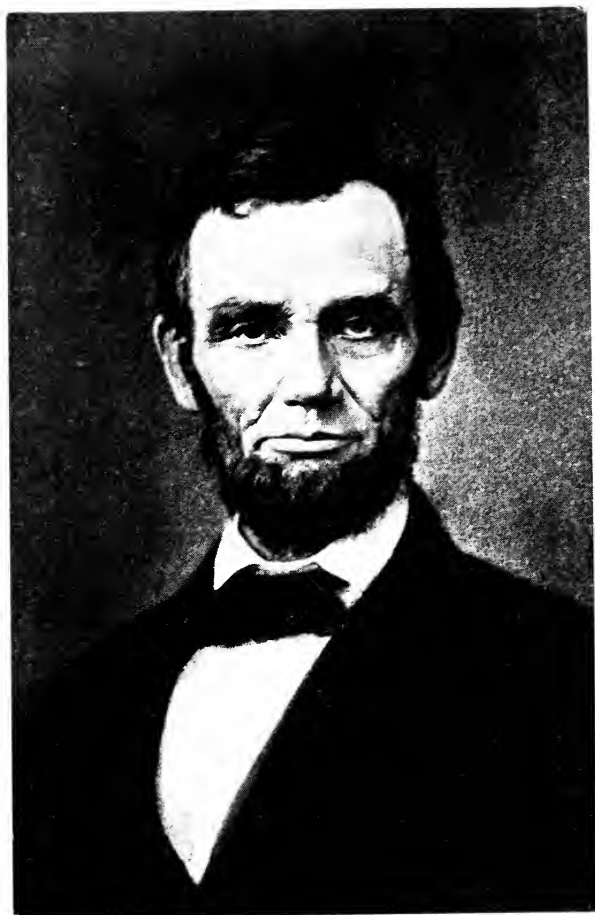


ASSASSINATION AND DEATH
OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN



October 1891



Enshrined Within the Hearts of Men:
OUR COUNTRY'S NOBLEST CITIZEN

ASSASSINATION AND DEATH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A CONTEMPORANEOUS ACCOUNT
OF A NATIONAL TRAGEDY

AS PUBLISHED IN
THE DAILY MORNING CHRONICLE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

With an INTRODUCTION *by* F. RAY RISDON

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INTRODUCTION

SIXTY YEARS have passed since the assassination and death of Abraham Lincoln.

Of the many contemporaneous accounts of this tragic event, which plunged the Nation into grief and caused the whole world to mourn the loss of one who was a friend of all mankind, perhaps none is more interesting and reliable than the record given in the news columns and on the editorial page of the Washington DAILY MORNING CHRONICLE, early Saturday morning, April 15, 1865.

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With the permission of Elizabeth K. Vincent, the author of that charming, personal document, "IN THE DAYS OF LINCOLN," which was published a year ago, this reprint has been made of the newspaper narrative which was given a prominent place in Mrs. Vincent's girlhood recollections of life in the Nation's capital during the stirring sixties.

The Associated Press reports, the War Department's dispatches and the official bulletins have been omitted purposely from the original account of this dire tragedy, in order that collectors of Lincolniana might have, in convenient form, this thrilling narrative as actually given to the world by the staff of this Washington daily on that dark day following the assassination of America's gentlest nobleman, who, though dead, looms today a colossal figure among the sons of men.


F. RAY RISDON

Los Angeles, California

MURDER OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN
ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
MANNER OF ASSASSINATION

SAFETY OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CABINET
DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSASSIN
THE POLICE INVESTIGATION
THE SURGEONS' LATEST REPORTS

THE SCENE AT THE THEATRE

T half past ten o'clock last night, in the front upper left-hand private box in Ford's Theatre, while the second scene of the third act of "Our American Cousin" was being played, a pistol was fired, and Abraham Lincoln shot through the neck and lower part of the head. A second after the shot was fired, a man vaulted over the baluster of the box, saying, "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" and, adding another sentence, which closed with the words, "revenge for the South," ran across the stage with a gleaming knife, double-edged and straight, in his right hand. The man was of middle stature, well-built, white-faced and beardless, save that he wore a black moustache. His hair and eyes were black.

The crowd ascended the stage; the actresses, pale beneath their rouge, ran wildly about. Miss Keene, whose benefit night it was, came forward, endeavoring to quiet the audience. Several gentlemen climbed to the box, and finally the audience were ordered out by some gentlemen.

Mrs. Lincoln, Miss Harris and Major Rathburn (*Rathbone*) were in the box with the President.

THE MURDEROUS ATTEMPT AT SECRETARY SEWARD'S

The report of an assassination attempted upon Secretary Seward having reached this office, we set out for the Secretary's house, and there found that he too had been assaulted. We learned also that at ten o'clock, just as the man in charge of Lafayette Square called out that the gates were closed, a man made his way into Secretary Seward's house, representing that he was the bearer of a medicine prescribed by Surgeon General Barnes, and which he was ordered to deliver to Secretary Seward in person.

Pushing into the Secretary's room, he seized the old, suffering statesman with one hand, and cut him with a dagger-knife on both jaws, then turned and forced his way into the hall, where meeting with Frederick Seward, the Secretary's son, he attacked him, and inflicted three wounds with a dagger-knife (probably the same) on the young man's head, breast, and hand. He also attacked Major Clarence Seward, another son of the Secretary of State, and inflicted upon him several serious wounds.

The assassin then rushed out, mounted a bay horse, with light mane, and rode off, not at a gallop, but at what is called a "pace."

Doctors Barnes, Norris, and Nutson were soon in attendance, and did all in their power for the sufferers.

Secretary Seward was able to speak and swallow, but both caused him much pain, though none of the arteries of the throat were cut. The doctors all agreed that the Secretary was in no immediate danger of losing his life.

Secretaries Stanton and Welles, as soon as they learned the solemn news, repaired to the residence of Mr. Seward, and also to the bedside of the President.

This being all we could there ascertain, we went in search of the Vice President, and found he was safe in his apartments at the Kirkwood. We called at Chief Justice Chase's and learned there, that he too was safe. Secretaries Stanton, Welles, and Usher, as also Vice President Johnson, and other members of the Cabinet, were with the President.

Guards were found by us at the residences of Chief Justice Chase, Secretary Usher, Vice President Johnson, and Secretary Stanton, and we were gratified to be able to announce that all members of the Cabinet, save Mr. Seward, are unharmed.

TRACES OF THE ASSASSIN OF THE PRESIDENT

We then ascertained that the police were on the track of the President's assassin, and found that a variety of evidences, all pointing one way, would in all probability justify the arrest of a character well known throughout the cities of the United States. Evidence taken amid such excitement would, perhaps, not justify us in naming the suspected man, nor could it aid in his apprehension. A number of persons have

been arrested who, it is hoped, will be able to identify him. The assassin left behind him his hat, a spur, and a horror and gloom never equalled in this country.

The hat was picked up in the President's box; and, since we began this statement, has been identified by parties to whom it has been shown, and accurately described as the one belonging to the suspected man, by other parties not allowed to see it ere describing it.

The spur was dropped upon the stage, and that also has been identified as the one procured at a stable where the same man procured a horse in the evening. The horse so obtained was a dark bay, which was also the color of that mounted at the stage door of the theatre by the flying assassin. The horse, up to the hour of 2 A.M., had not been returned to the stable; has been seen riderless, with English saddle and plain stirrups, roaming the streets, but escaped from pursuit.

THE CONDITION OF THE PRESIDENT

At 2:15 A.M., we hear that the wound of the President is very highly dangerous. The ball entered three inches below the left ear, and behind it a little, just beneath the base of the brain, took an upward direction, lodging in the brain, where it can be felt by the surgeons, but whence they cannot dislodge it.

AN ATTACK UPON SECRETARY STANTON THWARTED

Two gentlemen who went to apprise the Secretary of War of the attack on Mr. Lincoln,

met, at the residence of the former, a man muffled in a cloak, who, when accosted by them, hastened away without a word. It had been the Secretary's intention to accompany Mr. Lincoln and occupy the same box, but pressing business prevented.

It, therefore, is evident, that the aim of the plotters was to paralyze the country by at once striking down the head, the heart, and the arm of the country.

General Grant arrived safely at Philadelphia.

THE POPULAR COMMOTION

The whole city was moved. The crowds that poured through the streets gathered in numbers on the corners adjacent to the residences of the various members of the Cabinet; but the greatest and most excited gatherings were on E and Tenth streets, in the vicinity of Mr. Peterson's house, opposite Ford's Theatre, to which the President was removed. Mr. Lincoln was attended by Surgeons Hall, Stone, Ford, May, Leiberian, King, Surgeon General Barnes, Drs. Crane, Taft, Leale, Getz, McMillan, Abbott and Buckler.

THEY HAVE SLAIN THEIR BEST FRIEND

Comment on this deed now were worse than useless, were it even possible to us with our present feelings. The perpetrators of the deed stand (we hope we are not profane) like Judas Iscariot—in this; that they have stricken down the MAN who stood forth their best intercessor before the nation and the laws they had raised

their impious hands to slay by unprovoked rebellion. Their only shield, their truest, most forgiving friend, he who plead with his people to temper justice with mercy—him have they slain. And who can now tell the consequences?

POLICE HEADQUARTERS

No sooner had the dreadful event been announced in the street, than Superintendent Richards and his assistants were at work to discover the assassins. In a few moments the telegraph had aroused the whole police force of the city. Mayor Wallach, and several members of the city government were soon on the spot. Every measure of precaution was taken to preserve order in the city, and every street was patrolled. At the request of Mr. Richards, General Augur sent horses to mount the police. Every road out of Washington was picketed, and every possible avenue of escape thoroughly guarded. Steamboats about to depart down the Potomac were stopped.

As it is suspected that this conspiracy originated in Maryland, the telegraph flashed the mournful news to Baltimore, and all the cavalry was immediately put upon active duty. Every road was picketed, and every precaution taken to prevent the escape of the assassins.

A preliminary examination was made by Mr. Richards and his assistants. Several persons were called upon to testify, and the evidence, as elicited before an informal tribunal, and not under oath, was conclusive to this point: the murderer of President Lincoln was John Wilkes

Booth. His hat was found in the private box, and identified by several persons who had seen him within the last two days, and the spur which he dropped by accident, after he jumped to the stage, was identified as one of those which he obtained from the stable where he hired his horse.

This man Booth has played more than once at Ford's Theatre, and is, of course, acquainted with its exits and entrances, and the facility with which he escaped behind the scenes is easily understood. He is the son of Junius Brutus Booth, the renowned actor, and has, like one of his brothers, in vain attempted to gain a reputation on the stage. His father was an Englishman, and he was born in Baltimore. He has long been a man of intemperate habits and subject to temporary fits of great excitement. His capture is certain, but if he is true to his nature he will commit suicide, and thus appropriately end his career.

FURTHER ITEMS RESPECTING THE ASSASSIN

As everything that tends to throw light upon the matter is of interest, we think it well to add, that last evening a dark roan horse was hired at Thompson's stable, on the corner of E and Thirteenth streets, at about ten minutes after ten o'clock. The horse had a black English saddle and ordinary stirrups. The man who hired him was dressed in black, and was some five feet six inches in height. When asked when he would return, he said, "Probably in two hours, perhaps never." He wore a black moustache

and goatee. One of the stable boys followed him, but lost sight of him on Tenth street.

After hearing of the assassinations, the same stable boy rushed to the Navy yard, thinking to head the man and horse off, should he prove the criminal, but learned that the man and horse he described had passed over the bridge some time before; and being told that if he followed he would not be allowed back over the bridge, he followed no further, but returned.

It will be seen, by referring to another column, that General C. C. Augur, provost marshal of the Department of Washington, offers a reward of ten thousand dollars to the party or parties who will arrest the person or persons who assassinated the President, Mr. Lincoln, the Secretary of the State, Mr. Seward, and his son.

The person who assassinated Secretary Seward left behind him a slouched hat and an old, rusty navy revolver. The chambers were broken loose from the barrel, as if done by striking. The loads were drawn from the chambers, one being but a rough piece of lead, and the others balls smaller than the chambers,—wrapped in paper, as if to keep them from falling out.

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN,
SECRETARY WM. H. SEWARD, AND
ASSISTANT SECRETARY F. W.
SEWARD!

(AN EDITORIAL)

It is with feelings of profound horror, sorrow, and indignation, that we are called upon to announce to the country one of the most terrible tragedies of which history affords an example. At about half-past ten o'clock last evening President Lincoln was assassinated in Ford's Theatre, in Tenth street, between E and F, while quietly looking at the performance, all unconscious of danger. He occupied, in company with Mrs. Lincoln, and her friend, Miss Harris, the private box in the second tier, on the right.

The location of the wound on the skull, which was inflicted by a pistol ball, shows clearly that the President sat at the moment with his face to the stage, and that he had no intimation of the approach of the monster traitor who has robbed the country of its most precious life. The ball entered about three inches from the opening of the left ear, in the cerebellum, or lower half of the head, and penetrated several inches into the brain. The President immediately fell forward, and the villain at the same moment leaped over the railing upon the stage. He fell to the floor, but rose, ran to the rear of the stage and disappeared, brandishing a large knife and exclaiming, "The South is avenged! *Sic semper tyrannis!*" The amazement and horror of the audience were so great as to destroy all presence of mind, and the wretch escaped for the time by the back door.

The President, in a completely unconscious condition, was after a few minutes removed to the opposite side of the street, and placed in the comfortable house of Mr. Peterson, No. 453. He occupies the neat little bed-room in the back building, first floor, where he must in a few hours breathe his last.

Every aid which surgical and medical skill could supply was immediately given, but to no purpose. It was our melancholy privilege to see the great and good heart of Abraham Lincoln slowly giving up its life-blood, his heart-broken wife kneeling by his bedside, which was surrounded by all the members of the Cabinet, except Mr. Seward, as well as by other distinguished friends. Among the latter were Senator Sumner, Speaker Colfax, General Augur, General Meigs, General Farnsworth, of the House of Representatives, and others.

Thus has the day which was set apart as a day of rejoicing been turned into a day of mourning by one of those astounding exhibitions of desperate wickedness of which history, at long intervals, has given examples. Language would fail us in the attempt to portray the mingled anguish, horror, and indignation which pervades this community.

But we may say, in brief, at this late hour that treason has culminated in crime in the murder of President Lincoln, and that since the 14th day of April, 1861, when Fort Sumter was fired upon, nothing has occurred so calculated to exasperate the loyal millions, and cause them to

demand vengeance upon the authors of the rebellion.

It is now five o'clock, as we write, and we find it indispensable to close these remarks with only a brief reference to the contemporaneous effort to murder Secretary Seward, and his son, F. W. Seward. It is not yet ascertained whether the murderous assault upon these gentlemen was made by the same desperate wretch who assassinated the President. It is probable, however, that there were confederates, and that other distinguished gentlemen only escaped by accident.

A strong suspicion was fixed upon J. Wilkes Booth, an inferior actor, and the son of the old tragedian of that name, as the murderer of the President. But for particulars we must refer the reader to our local columns.

P. S.—A letter found in Booth's trunk identifies him as the murderer.

CHRONICLE OFFICE,

April 15—6 A.M.

The President is still alive, but is sinking rapidly. He cannot survive much longer. No change in the condition of Mr. Seward.

15, 1865.

SECOND EDITION.

DEATH OF

THE PRESIDENT

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IS DEAD!

If tears had audible language, a shriek would go up from these States which would startle the world from its propriety.

Strong men use the impressive language of women — TEARS. Women bow their heads in the dust. Children sleep troubledly.

Words are at this time weak and vain. Let us all, with heart and voice, say that

"THIS GRAVE

SHALL HAVE A LIVING MONUMENT!"

GRAVE

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